



ASLEF

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MARCH 2015

Fierce the beacon's light of public ownership is flaming in Wales



MANUEL CORTES: Greeks have answer to austerity
KELVIN HOPKINS on the EU: Time to leave the party
ANDY HUDD: In the cab of the Starship Enterprise

15 Fighting for the Foreign Legion

22 WW1 letters home from the trenches

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Working to get round the ban on free speech

THE Welsh Labour Party conference in Swansea reaffirmed that working people and their families need real change from a future government. There is a genuine willingness to look at other models that could deliver a better railway for the people and rail workers of Wales and ensure that surpluses are redistributed for the greater good – and our item on a not for profit model was accepted after a vote.

There are a number of work streams which will involve third parties possibly contacting you directly in relation to the union, its affiliation to the Labour Party, and where we stand at the election. Traditionally, all union members were automatically affiliated to the Labour Party and had the right to nominate and vote in leadership elections and positions such as London Mayor. Since the Collins report, union members still have the right to do this, at no cost, but have to affiliate individually; so much work is being done to ensure you have the voice to which your membership of ASLEF entitles you.

Since the coalition banned free speech under the Lobbying Act trade unions, NGOs and charities cannot talk politics in the year of an election so much indirect work by other organisations will take place in the next few months.

Social engineering – gerrymandering of the worst kind – means a million eligible voters have been removed from the electoral roll if they do not reside at home. That means every student will have to register to have the vote for which our ancestors fought. It is the traditional responsibility of a trade union to give its members and their families that right, and access to a democratic voice within the Labour Party, and we are endeavouring by every means possible to do this.

These processes are as new to us as they are to you and a strain on the time and resources of the union; but it would be an abrogation of our responsibility not to give train drivers the opportunity they should have as members of a trade union.

Yours fraternally

Mick Whelan, general secretary



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ABOUT **ASLEF**

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Mick plays Daniel in RSA lions' den

MICK WHELAN, ASLEF's general secretary, gave the great and the good of Britain's rail industry 'a fresh take on transport' when he spoke at a meeting in the New Theatre at the London School of Economics and Political Science. The Railway Study Association describes itself as a 'forum for the exchange of experience, knowledge and opinion on issues relating to all aspects of the railway industry' but its membership – 'embracing operations, engineering, business planning, project management, marketing and consultancy' – is rarely exposed to the views of those at the sharp end of the business. For most of them, privatisation is an article of faith, but Mick told it as it is.

He said: 'We never believed in the rationale for the 1993 Railways Act. It was political dogma – even Margaret Thatcher said it was a privatisation too far – but John Major told the country that Europe said we had to break up

the railways, separating wheels and steel. So I find it strange that, 20 years on, the rest of Europe has not followed suit. Now the EU is seeking to introduce the Fourth Railway Package in an effort to use the failed British model as a template for going forward.

'I have lost count of the number of Transport Ministers we have had. No government, Labour or Conservative, has really addressed the failures of privatisation. John Major said privatisation would deliver competition, investment, and innovation. There is next to no competition in the passenger sector. We have a series of geographical monopolies, even on multiple-user tracks. Competition was supposed to drive down fares. But fares have gone up way ahead of inflation. Virtually all investment is from central government, whether for rolling stock or infrastructure. There is nothing in the franchise model to encourage traditionally risk-averse companies to invest. Innovation only happens when the government invests.

'It is clear, 20 years on, that privatisation has failed. We have campaigned for years, not only for railways, but for an integrated transport strategy. We need an investment process that looks 10, 20, 30 years ahead for our country's future.'

Turning to the role of trade unions in the rail industry, Mick said: 'No one ever gave us anything. It was negotiated on the back of short term flexibility or productivity. It is within my own memory when drivers did not get sick pay at all and, later, only if they had completed ten years' service. Many could not get a mortgage, because the bulk of their income was based on overtime. Always there, but not guaranteed.

'Some companies thought they could



The GS stepped into the lions' den when he addressed the RSA at the LSE

avoid the collective bargaining process, particularly during the last year of a franchise. Some sought to introduce measures such as average weekly earnings or the Consumer Price Index after agreeing that the basis for all pay would be the Retail Price Index. The most common of all is new organisations seeking to reinterpret agreed matters that have been operating for years.'

Mick concluded: 'It might be nice if there was more employee representation in our industry. We bargain with the members of ATOC, but can't talk to ATOC itself. There is the Rail Executive at the DfT – I don't what it is, or what it does – and there is the old fashioned Victorian railway owners' group, the vested interests of the Rail Delivery Group, a public relations system for promoting the current model and claiming success.'

John Glover of the RSA said afterwards: 'It was a splendid talk.'

QUOTE...

'Many Britons seem not to have noticed, but on 7 May they will have an epic choice. Vote Conservative in the general election and they will be signing up for an eye-watering shrinkage of the state. Vote Labour and they will pitch for much lighter cuts and a programme of intervention in the economy intended to make it fairer and more productive and so obviate, Ed Miliband claims, the need for much future borrowing.'

– **Bagehot** in *The Economist*

...UNQUOTE

ANIMALS ON THE LINE

Five horses were killed when they were struck by two trains, travelling in opposite directions, between Darlington and Middlesbrough near Durham Tees Valley airport. British Transport Police said: 'We are trying to determine how the horses came to be near the line.'

Wales leads the way

After a powerful and persuasive speech by Mick Whelan, the Welsh Labour Party, in conference at the Brangwyn Hall in Swansea, voted in February in favour of an ASLEF motion welcoming the Welsh government's proposal to run the rail franchise in Wales on a not for profit basis.

● Please turn to the centre pages for our special report on Rails in Wales.



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The GS presents 50 year medallions to David Chalkley (right) and Peter Baines (far right) who both joined ASLEF on the same day – 30 October 1964.



Labour the only show in town

Polly Billington, Labour's candidate in the key marginal of Thurrock at the general election, which the Tories won with a majority of just 92 in 2010, made a powerful case for voting Labour when she spoke to District 5's political meeting at Hornchurch railway club.

Polly, a former BBC

radio reporter who worked for both Radio 1's *Newsbeat* and *Today* on Radio 4, and who now works for Citizens Advice, lives at Grays in the heart of the constituency. District 5 Organiser Nigel Gibson introduced her, outlining the threat from the UK Independence Party right across the

eastern region, before handing over to Khalid Rana of Gidea Park to chair the meeting.

Grace Ogden, Hope Not Hate's organiser in Thurrock, talked about the work the anti-racist organisation is doing in mobilising sections of the local community. Polly explained how a vote for Labour is a vote for better housing, and better employment rights, and a contrast to 'the fear and scapegoating from UKIP and the Conservative Party' in the area. GS Mick Whelan spoke about ASLEF's ongoing commitment to Labour and explained why the party is 'the only show in town' for trade unionists.

An energetic discussion followed which included passionate contributions from, amongst others, Cliff Holloway of Euston and Mark Daniels of Barking main line.



Polly Billington addresses the meeting (above) and then joins the drivers for the traditional team picture (below)



CONFERENCES

The **Scottish Labour Party conference** is at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow on Saturday 7 March. The **Scottish TUC** is at Ayr racecourse from Monday 20 to Wednesday 22 April. ASLEF's **annual assembly of delegates** is at the Park Inn, Southend, from Tuesday 12 to Friday 15 May. The **Durham Miners' Gala** is on Saturday 11 July. The **Tolpuddle Martyrs' festival**, near Dorchester, is from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 July. The **Burston strike school rally** is at Burston, near Diss, in Norfolk on Sunday 6 September. The **Trades Union Congress** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 13 to Wednesday 16 September and the **Labour Party conference** is at the Brighton Centre from Sunday 27 to Wednesday 30 September.

MONEY FOR NOTHING AND TRICKS FOR FREE

Eversholt, one of Britain's big three rolling stock leasing companies, is to be sold to the Hong Kong-based group CK Investments SARL. Subject to approval by the European Commission, the sale of the RoSCo – which is owned by a consortium including Morgan Stanley, 3i Infrastructure and Star Capital Partners – will go through next month. Eversholt owns about 28% of the UK's passenger rolling stock.

500 CLUB: E Murray, with number 82, won the February draw, scooping the RMS prize money jackpot of £362.

Off the rails



ELLA PORTER, fed up with going to bed without a cuddle from her dad, because of delays on his Southern service from London Bridge to Uckfield, wrote a letter to the boss. 'Dear Mr Railway Man,' she wrote. 'My Daddy is always late home and I miss him very much because he always used to tuck me into bed. This makes me upset. Please get him home on time.' Ella, six, added as an afterthought: 'Daddy says you take all his money, that is why I can't go to Disneyland. I really want to go to Disneyland.' Her father Neil, who spends more than £4,000 each year travelling to work in Shoreditch from his home in Sussex, also tweeted the company, saying, a tad optimistically, 'I think @SouthernRailUK should compensate my daughter for her time without her dad.'



HOWARD KAYE, executive committee member for District 5, and a driver with East Coast, who is standing against Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt in South West Surrey, has made a guest appearance in Kevin Maguire's column in the *Daily Mirror*. 'Jeremy Hunt's local Tory council is threatening campaigners who have been erecting NHS Stop the Sale estate agent style boards in gardens,' wrote the *Mirror* man. 'Train driver Howard Kaye, Hunt's Labour opponent, sent me a Waverley council letter claiming the signs breach planning laws and will be taken down unless removed. Does the Surrey Stasi also steal placards that are advertising church events and school fetes? No, but it silences free speech to spare Hunt's blushes.'



TOSH McDONALD celebrated his 54th birthday – and his recent election as EC president – with former presidents Bill Ronksley

and Martin Samways and by dancing to GG & the Hell Hounds – featuring Worksop branch secretary Keith Gillett on drums – at the Flying Scotsman Tap in Doncaster. Which reminds us of an old showbiz gag. What do you call someone who hangs around musicians? A drummer...

CHOPPER WHOPPER. Just before Christmas 'enhanced interrogation' joined the long list of dodgy political euphemisms such as 'collateral damage', 'extraordinary rendition' and 'economical with the truth'. Best one this year is NBC news anchor Brian Williams admitting he wasn't on a Chinook hit by a rocket propelled grenade during the Iraq war, but in the helicopter behind. He didn't lie, though. He 'misremembered.' As you do...

TRAIN DRIVER has been voted ninth most desirable job in Britain – after author; librarian; academic; lawyer; interior designer; journalist; doctor; and TV presenter – in a new poll by YouGov. Ahead of teacher, accountant, investment banker, and, er, movie star and racing driver.

Are you going to the party?



KARIN CHRISTIANSEN, general secretary of the Co-operative Party, on why the future of the Co-op is in your hands

DO YOU have a Co-operative membership card? Or know someone who does? Because, if so, we need you. In April the Co-operative group (the shops, funeral service, electrics, etc) intends to ballot members on whether it should continue its partnership with the Co-operative Party. We need a yes vote. The very act of co-operation is political. And, just like trade unionists, before them co-operators, including those at the helm of what has become the Co-operative group, realised they, too, needed a voice in parliament. That's why the Co-operative Party was founded in 1917.

Since then we have been making the case in parliament for a level playing field for

businesses that put the needs of customers and workers before short-term profit for shareholders. This means co-operative energy projects to rival the Big Six, co-operative schools to challenge academy chains, and credit unions as an alternative to pay day loan sharks. The Co-operative Party now has 31 MPs and hundreds of councillors (who stand jointly with the Labour Party) across Britain.

The Co-operative group's commitment to political action is what makes it different from other businesses. It's why those of us who believe in a different way of doing business go out of our way to shop there. But it's this 100 year old link that is now in jeopardy, as the group considers its future.

Railway workers were the original pioneers of the co-operative movement, spreading news of co-operation and the achievements of the Rochdale Pioneers to working people up and down the country. But they weren't just missionaries – they were also instrumental in setting up co-operatives.

In 1854 railway workers founded the Derby co-operative, one of the oldest in the Midlands, and backed the first Labour MP for Derby who was the general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Workers. In

Tamworth railway workers joined forces with a prominent vicar to set up a co-operative. It will come as no surprise to hear that railway workers were often dismissed for being a member of a co-operative.

I know that, as proud trade unionists, members of ASLEF believe in the power of the people to challenge big business and vested interests. If you have a Co-operative membership card, or know someone who does, or want to join our campaign, please visit www.keepit.coop. And if you receive a ballot on your doormat or inbox please vote yes to keep the link. The future of the Co-op is in your hands.

QUOTE...

'Davos is largely made up of people who don't have to deal with those little annoyances (aka everyday life) that normal people do, yet are intent on lecturing us hoi polloi on how to live our lives.' – **Lucy Tobin in the Evening Standard**

...UNQUOTE

Batteries included

A prototype battery-powered train has carried its first passengers on Britain's rail network. It has been developed as a joint project by Network Rail, Bombardier, Abellio Greater Anglia, Future Railway and the Department for Transport. A modified Class 379 Electrostar ran a weekday timetable between Harwich International and Manningtree. The DfT believes battery-powered trains could replace diesel traction on branch

lines, and parts of the network, where it's too expensive to install overhead electrification. 'This is a major milestone in this innovative project, proof of our commitment to deliver a world class rail network fit for the 21st century,' said Rail Minister Claire Perry. But Mick Whelan said: 'How can it be a commitment to a 21st century railway when they don't want to upgrade the infrastructure and are looking to make do and mend alternatives?'



The prototype in action

Longsight honours Colin

ALAN MOSS pays tribute to a brother at Longsight

It was a privilege to honour the unswerving loyalty of Comrade Colin Allsobrook, who has taken early retirement, at our branch meeting in January. Colin started his railway career in 1978 as a trainee at Timperley, a place synonymous with Frank Sidebottom, and 14 months later moved onto the footplate as a traction trainee. He didn't join ASLEF until 1981, due to the poaching dispute with the NUR, but once a member very quickly became active and, as a second man, was on the LDC.

Colin was at Manchester Victoria, Piccadilly and Altrincham and saw redundancy and transfer through privatisation, eventually ending up at Longsight with CrossCountry where he served on the LLC until he retired. John Hay, council rep from Edinburgh, and Colin's oldest industry friend, Comrade Lee Stevenson, spoke warmly of what he did for members. On behalf of everyone, all the best in your retirement.

Class action



ELLIE O'HAGAN of the Centre for Labour and Social Studies

on how you can join the great debate

The general election in May is, arguably, the most important since 1945. It is

also very hard to predict the outcome. To help ASLEF activists get involved in pre-election discussions, we are producing election guides, organising events, writing blogs, and publishing policy briefings and infographics. We are also holding a series of events across the country about

what's at stake. At each event we will launch an election guide for a specific policy with the help of experts in the field.

In Glasgow in February we talked about trade unions, work and pay with Neil Findlay MSP. In Newcastle, about housing with Mark Ferguson of LabourList. And in Birmingham, about austerity with Joe Morgan of the GMB.

In Manchester on Thursday 5 March we'll be debating the NHS with Allyson Pollock,

Professor of Public Health at Queen Mary, University of London; Dr Kailash Chand, deputy chair of the BMA; and Liz McInnes, Labour MP for Heywood & Middleton.

And in Bristol on Thursday 19 March we're talking tax with Richard Murphy of Tax Research UK and David Drew, Labour's candidate in Stroud.

We'd love to see you at either event. To get involved, please visit our website, classonline.org.uk, for details.



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Politics of hope on the rise again



MANUEL CORTES, general secretary of the TSSA, reports from Greece, cradle of Western democracy, and now a country at the heart of the economic battle being fought across the European Union

Hope has trumped fear. Gone are the barricades that police erected around the Greek parliament and government ministries across Athens to protect the politicians from their people. There is renewed optimism that the worst may be over. A far cry from the mass confrontations which were the order of the day as inhumane austerity measures rained down on ordinary Greeks.

Yet the Syriza government has only just started work in earnest. A whistlestop tour of European capitals by Alexis Tsipras and his finance minister is underway as I write. Their aim, which is

the freely expressed will of the Greek people, is to renegotiate the country's debt so that its battered economy can start growing again. Rumours are rife that a deal may be done as Europe's elite is fearful of the domino effect of the anti-austerity vote in Greece. Uppermost in their minds is whether Spain will be next as a general election is due there later this year.

If they are looking for a culprit, they need look no further than themselves. What happened in Greece was a humanitarian and social crisis manufactured by Europe's neoliberal

elite. A crisis caused by the neoliberals' economic shock therapy, as Naomi Klein described it in her book *The Shock Doctrine*. That is why Greeks valiantly resisted and voted for change. The numbers are sadly startling: GDP has shrunk by 25% since mid-2008; 26% are now unemployed, rising to over 60% among the young; and more than 23% of Greeks are officially living in poverty although the real number is far higher, with 27% no longer having access to healthcare. Yet, far from reducing the debt, austerity has made it skyrocket

from around 120% of GDP to almost 175% by the end of 2014. As in the UK, and elsewhere in Europe, austerity has spectacularly failed to reduce debt; it has done quite the opposite. That is why Syriza's call for an international conference to renegotiate Greece's debt and that of other eurozone countries chimes strongly way beyond its shores.

What is clear, and there is a growing global consensus about this, is that, irrespective of what additional sufferings are imposed on its people, Greece will

never be able to fully repay its debt. It is incredibly cruel and inhumane to delay doing something about this whilst austerity continues, causing a social and economic maelstrom.

The Greek people have had more than enough and voted for the change of economic direction Syriza offered. What's

Alexis Tsipras celebrates Syriza's victory at the general election in January

happening in Greece will have global repercussions as the future of the ideology which gave birth to austerity is on trial. Syriza's victory also puts pressure on Europe's social democratic parties which will get pulverised in elections if they don't move on from failed neoliberalism – Labour should take note. The Syriza government and the people of Greece carry the hopes and aspirations of the global 99% and we must offer our solidarity and support! The politics of hope are on the rise...



QUOTE...

'In 2015 it is becoming clear that we are arriving at a tipping point – a moment when unchecked inequality of both income and wealth is about to metastasise into a serious economic and social cancer.' – **Will Hutton**

...UNQUOTE

See you in Albert Square

Each year District 3 North West & North Wales supports Workers' Memorial Day in Manchester. 'This year, with a general election fast approaching, is more important than ever,' says Alan Moss of Longsight branch. 'Cuts to health & safety by those in power cost lives, so please show your support and play a part in Albert Square on Tuesday 28 April.' For more information contact Alan on 07917 063665 or Colin Smith on 07977 142460 and remember – unionised workplaces are safer workplaces.



Colin and Alan want your support

Val tells Boris 'on your bike'

Boris Johnson's plan to close London Underground ticket offices – which will mean the loss of hundreds of jobs – will cost a staggering £134 million. That's the cost of installing new ticket machines and refurbishing ticket halls. 'It will be money well spent, in the long term,' claims TfL. But Val Shawcross, who speaks on transport

for Labour in the London Assembly, says: 'A staggering £134 million of building work and ticket machines won't make up for the loss of 897 station staff. No matter how user-friendly a ticket

machine, it cannot provide the same level of help, advice and customer service that staff can. Passengers are wondering why, under the Conservatives, they are paying more money for fewer staff on their journeys.'

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We're an asset not a burden

PETER SMITH reports from the Retired Members' Section agm in Bristol

IN AN attempt to make it easier for all members to attend we have held our annual general meeting at various venues around the country; on this occasion it was at Unite's Tony Benn building in Bristol. Ray Jackson, the RMS chair, opened proceedings and moved a vote of thanks to Les Muir for compiling the minutes of the last meeting. Bristol branch secretary Bernard Kennedy gave us a warm welcome to the city; District 7 Officer Brian Corbett told us about his work on behalf of members; and the general secretary, Mick Whelan, gave us a state of the nation address.

Neil Duncan-Jordan of the National Pensioners' Convention said 'It's a big, bad world out there' and dispelled some of the myths put about by those in power. Pensioners, he said, are an asset not a burden;

we save the country over £40 billion in child minding and unpaid work in the voluntary sector. And a bus pass generates £4 for the economy every time it is used! He urged us to lobby MPs to retain universal benefits which help us so much and not to be fooled by means tests which would not save anything – it would cost more to administer than it would save – and everyone who pays in is entitled to it anyway.

Alan Taylor gave a report on our accounts and thanked everyone who supports the 500 Club which enables us to hold a weekend

school at Low Hall, Scalby, in North Yorkshire. Motions for AAD were put to the floor for discussion and adoption. And Ray Jackson and Tony West gave a report on what the committee does for ASLEF, the RMS and the community as a whole.

Ray and Tony were re-elected unopposed as chair and national secretary of the RMS and the committee was also re-elected. The chair closed by thanking Lee James, ASLEF's equalities adviser, for the sterling organising work she has done on our behalf throughout the year and for making it all possible.



Bernard Kennedy welcomes the RMS to Bristol (far left); Ray thanks the GS (left); the DO addresses delegates (above); and Ray says thanks to Lee (above right)

QUOTE...

'One sorry legacy of the euro crisis has been a weakening of the bonds of democratic legitimacy between rulers and ruled. The euro zone has only just begun to grapple with the tensions of a monetary union not backed by a political one.'

– **Charlemagne** in *The Economist*

...UNQUOTE

Walking for Charlotte

Nick Duncan, an East Coast driver based at Newcastle, is doing a charity walk for CLIC Sargent care. 'We're walking from Whitehaven to Sunderland on the coast to coast route, 140 miles in five days, starting on 1 April – insert your own April's Fool gag here – and finishing on Easter Sunday.' Nick's cousin Malcolm's four-year-old daughter Charlotte has rhabdomyosarcoma, cancer of the soft tissue, above her right eye. 'We can't cure cancer,' says Nick, 'so we're doing what we can,



Thumbs up for Charlotte (right) from Nick, uncle Jonny and dad Malcolm

and CLIC Sargent is a children's cancer charity which has given us – and countless others – indispensable support.'

You can find more details at www.justgiving.com/Nick-Duncan1/

The Bourne identity

John Cooke Bourne was an artist, engraver and photographer best known for his series of lithographs depicting the construction of the London & Birmingham Railway in the 1830s and the Great Western Railway in the 1840s. *To Check the Tide of Prejudice* in the Coalbrookdale Gallery at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum in Shropshire is an ambitious new exhibition of his lithographs, wash drawings and original sketches which were used, in the early days of the Victorian railway building boom, to hit back, as his publisher John Britton put it, at 'jealous and fastidious critics in the Houses of Parliament, and out of them.' Big landowners, small farmers, and social commentators – most of them Tories –



Kilsby Tunnel by John Cooke Bourne (right) and Viaduct Over the River Blythe (above)

railed against the railways.

'What was happening in the 1830s closely mirrors current public debate surrounding the construction of HS2, which can be seen as the rebuilding of the London to Birmingham railway in the 21st century,' says Paul Gossard of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. 'There are parallels between many of the

arguments raised 180 years ago against the building of the railway with those now being heard.' The exhibition – which runs from 30 April to 10 September and to which admission is free – provides a rare glimpse into the building of Britain's railway network and the navigators – or navvies – who built them.



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You've got to pick a pocket or two, boys



SIMON WELLER,
ASLEF's national
organiser, reveals
what changes in
our pensions mean – and
what we can do about it

A S PART of its austerity agenda, the government is proposing wide ranging changes to the state pension – and not just to the age of retirement. This time David Cameron and George Osborne are picking the pockets of the occupational pension schemes. The government has passed legislation that ends pension contracting out from 6 April 2016, when the new single tier state pension comes into operation. Where schemes such as the Railway Pension Scheme are currently contracted out, this will mean an increase in both employers' and members' National Insurance contributions from that date.

The government has made provision, through a statutory override mechanism, for employers to recoup their increased NI contributions by making changes to contributions and/or benefit structures without recourse to pension trustees or committees. The increased contributions the train operating companies are seeking to recoup across all sections is approximately £40 million. The government proposed that the override would also apply to pension schemes with statutory protection. This includes the RPS, applicable for those who were members prior to 5 November 1993.

FULL AND FRANK DISCUSSION

We opposed this and were successful in arguing against the proposed changes in benefits to protected members. In this context, I understand that RPMI consider members with an 'indefeasible right' in the same category as protected.

The average proportion of protected members in TOCs is around 20%. We are seeking clarification from the Department for Work and Pensions whether the increased NIC is to be the full amount spread across the 80% of non-protected members or, as we believe, only the increased NIC from those without protection, in effect only 80% of £40 million. It is worth noting that protected members are likely to be in the higher earning bracket after 20 years of promotions, etc, so their NICs are



likely to be a greater proportion of that estimated £40 million.

The DWP says the statutory override to recoup employer NIC increases is a tool of last resort and negotiated settlements are the first option. To this end, the ATOC-backed Informal Pensions Working Group met on 24 October 2014. The IPWG, consisting of ATOC representatives and senior officers of the four rail unions, has been meeting regularly since 2006 with a remit to negotiate and agree changes to the RPS resulting from the triennial valuations. It aims to ensure a consistent approach across all the TOCs and to ensure the scheme remains affordable and sustainable.

ATOC wants an agreement by the spring so the TOCs can prepare their budgets for 2016. We had a full and frank discussion at that meeting; particularly about the nakedly political nature of the changes which are different to previous decisions based around ongoing valuations.

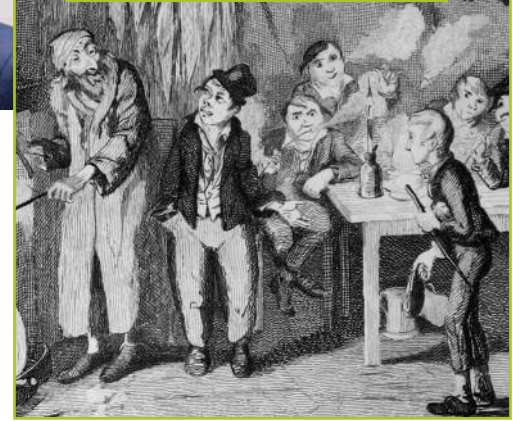
GIFT OF THE GOVERNMENT

There are legitimate concerns around future affordability, especially as employee NICs will also increase because of the contracted out changes. Pension contribution rates for employees are rising and there is increasing concern that while we are not seeing significant dropout from the scheme high rates may deter new joiners, despite auto-enrolment.

NIC increases affect, disproportionately, the lower paid. The central tenet to the ATOC proposal was to align the normal retirement age with the state retirement age with early retirement factors now cost-neutral. While at first glance this may appear to be in line with our policy (in relation to default retirement age, not pension normal retirement age), for many members it would mean a changed normal retirement age rising from age 60 to 68.

It is also worth noting that SRA is in the gift of the government and could change in the future. Young workers may not even know when they would be entitled to receive their pension as the SRA moves ever older. I made it clear at the meeting that this proposal would not find favour with ASLEF.

It may seem that the easy option would be to oppose any changes and expect the employers to foot the bill but things are, unfortunately, not that simple. If the unions come to an agreed deal to recoup the



Chancellor George Osborne (above left) wants to pick your pocket for your pension pot (top) like Fagin (above) in George Cruikshank's drawing for *Oliver Twist*

increased NIC (both employer's and employee's) then that is a one-time solution and the employer may not revisit the matter once they have come to an agreement. It is not necessary for this agreement to allow the employer to recoup the full cost of the NIC rise but neither is it limited to 3.4%. However, if an existing TOC were to apply the statutory override they could do so whenever they feel the need, until autumn 2019, albeit only to achieve a reduction in line with the NIC increase of 3.4%.

RAIDING WORKERS' PENSIONS

They could apply this on an annual basis as the proportion of protected members reduces through attrition, thereby increasing the number of members from whom they can reclaim the increased NICs. However, the earnings data must be the same as the initial calculation if they use this power more than once; what changes is the number of people to which it can be applied. It is arguable that franchises that take over after April 2016 would not be able to claim that non-contracted out NICs are an increase in business costs as they would (or should) have factored them in when bidding. If TOCs were to start independently applying the statutory override we would lose control of consistent application of changes to pension sections. So far, through the IPWG we have been able to maintain a level of control on the changes.

We face two issues. The first is how the TOCs recoup their increased NICs without resorting to the statutory override. The second is how we reduce the impact of the NIC increase on members. What is clear is that, once again, the government is raiding workers' pensions to fund tax cuts for the rich and we will end up footing the bill.

Cab that looks like the bridge of the Starship Enterprise



ANDY HUDD, executive committee member for District 7, examines the job of the train driver in the *Star Trek* cab of the 21st century and the role in the rail industry for new technology

HUMANITY has a remarkable ability to adapt and change to its surroundings and has invented tools and technologies that have advanced us from lives in caves to voyages into outer space. In the last 200 years industry in Great Britain has taken a massive leap forward with the use of fossil fuels and machines that have transformed manufacturing, transport and society.

In our own industry we have seen steam locomotives replaced by diesel and electric. What was once a policeman with a flag is now replaced by signals with light emitting diodes and computerised signalling systems that have enabled our industry to manage unprecedented numbers of journeys carrying millions of passengers and tonnes of freight every year. Now we are witnessing the dawn of a new era in the rail industry, another steam to diesel moment that will change our railway and the role of a train driver for ever.

The European Railway Traffic Management System will eventually allow us to run trains without signals and at higher speeds. We already have train management systems that can communicate faults to control centres hundreds of miles away to allow engineers to evaluate, diagnose and respond to on board problems during a journey.

DRIVERLESS TRAINS

Driver advisory systems, although innocuous enough in the beginning, now have the potential (through the development of more accurate GPS) to provide the platform that the industry needed to incorporate it into ERTMS and advanced traffic management systems and, potentially, be key to the development of driverless trains.

Not only is the industry developing its own technology, it is applying technology readily available in domestic life in tablet PCs and smart phones. Already plans are in place to ensure that all paper based publications become solely electronic and booking, face to face or via the telephone, will potentially become a thing of the past as hardware and software develop to allow booking on wirelessly.

Of course, our cab environment will change



Andy lets the train take the strain with mock ups of the new class 800/1 driver's cab



along with these developments. Old stock will see their ergonomic design and engineering specifications tested to the limit to accommodate additional equipment while newly built traction will have a cab that looks more like a set from *Star Trek*.

HIGH SPEED WHACK-A-MOLE

With GSMR, touch screen train management systems, CCTV, passenger communication devices, tablet PCs and other hands-on systems, the duties that the driver will have to deal with will increase significantly. On the outside this makes the future of the train driver look more like a game of high speed Whack-a-Mole than a craft but it can also be argued that the ability to interact with computerised systems and technology on this level is not detracting from the role but, rather, changing it from the mechanical to the technical and may, actually, make us more indispensable.

So the challenges are stark and plenty. We have to carefully examine the impact of these technologies on all aspects of our craft, and that is why your executive committee has established a technology sub-committee to deal with technological developments as they arise and provide guidance to your negotiators.

Additionally, we continue to have meaningful consultations in the design of new driving cabs. In the past, the idea of a train driver having input into the design of a train was derided by management and seen only as

an aspiration by drivers. Now we have more and more involvement in the process as it has been realised that we have an intimate knowledge of our craft and making the cab fit for purpose before it is built saves more time and money than if these changes are made retrospectively.

OUR ROLE TOMORROW

And while the recent large scale investment is welcome it has got to be asked whether this investment would have continued if Network Rail's spiralling £38 billion debt wasn't now the responsibility of the taxpayer. So it is right that we continue to campaign for all of our railway to be owned by, and made accountable to, the public. Only this will allow for the continual investment and technological development needed to provide the taxpayer with a modern, safe and reliable railway with the interests of the travelling public at its heart.

Finally, the logical conclusion of the development of technology in our industry is the creation of traction, signalling systems and infrastructure that is intelligent enough to remove the need for on board human interaction and control. Although a fully automated railway is technologically distant we must be mindful that the decisions we make today could have a dramatic impact on our role tomorrow.

FIERCE THE BEACON'S LIGHT IS FLAMING



**District 7 Organiser
BRIAN CORBETT
reports on the
future for the
railway in Wales**

SINCE my last report, over who would be paying for railway electrification in South Wales, this was agreed, at long last, by Westminster and the Welsh Assembly. It will have a great impact on the economy, and jobs, which are badly needed in the areas through to Swansea, along the valley lines, and services will be greatly improved.

While we look forward to this, we must also look at going further, not only in the long term but also the short, and continue working with fellow stakeholders and campaign groups in and outside the industry to have electrification in North and West Wales as well, new and fit for purpose trains (not clapped out old rolling stock) as this will undermine the process of improving train services.

As for the freight sector, in South Wales, the M4 corridor is not only full to bursting with road hauliers, but the expectation is of a vast increase in road traffic over the next few years, although there has not been any release of official statistics from the Department for Transport for the projected increase in traffic.

In North Wales we have the rail network to Holyhead, yet you only need to look at the roads to see what a state we are in; when the service is cancelled to bad weather across the Irish Sea the result is a massive backlog of trucks. Surely, with all the attention given to climate change and the environment, there needs to be an urgent look at the whole transport industry and mega trucks (which the European Union continues to promote) from abroad.

On the political front, the general secretary and I set up a Welsh Assembly group with the great assistance of Julie James, Assembly Member for Swansea West and Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology. On 24 February, Mick Whelan addressed AMs, outlining our transport policy to representatives from *all* the political parties. This was our first meeting and we hope it



will develop into a progressive arena for future rail policy with Assembly Members in Wales.

The Welsh government would like to run a not for profit railway and are looking at Welsh Water, which is already not for profit, to see what they can learn from this for the future. Finally, congratulations to John Boreham on becoming a member of the executive of the Wales TUC.

RIGHT MOVE FOR THE RAILWAY

Mick Whelan, general secretary, has welcomed the announcement by Edwina Hart, Transport Minister in Wales, to have a plan for a not for profit railway ready by the summer. He said: 'We're excited about this announcement because we believe it is a move in the right direction, not just for the railway in Wales but for the railway in Britain. Because we know the current business model doesn't work. It has failed the people, and the companies, of this country. The privatised train operating companies are plundering profits from the public purse – it's the taxpayer who coughs up for the investment in infrastructure and rolling stock – while each year pushing through rip-off fare rises so passengers here now pay more than anyone else in Western Europe. We believe in a publicly-owned, publicly-accountable railway which delivers for everyone – for passengers, for staff, and for taxpayers. We have seen the enormous success of East Coast in public hands, returning more than £1 billion to the Treasury, money that can be invested in the railway, or in schools, or in our hospitals, rather than being sent, in the form of profits and dividends, to shareholders of private companies, often sheltering overseas. We want, and deserve, an integrated, not fragmented, railway network in Britain and this is a first step in that direction.'

ATTEND YOUR BRANCH TO GET YOUR VIEWS HEARD

Arriva Trains Wales company council has a very busy year ahead with important issues to be faced. We have attended meetings to finally resolve 9 hr 30 min maximum turn length with PNBs between the 3/5th hour (the diagram work has been done, so we are told) and we await the company presentation to council. Driver Advisory Systems is all but complete and fitment will shortly begin on the 142/143 fleet. Cab environment group meetings are diarised with the chair or secretary of the drivers' health & safety group attending on a rota basis. Please continue to book unit faults and let your reps know of problems, because we are developing a stream of work this year to address fatigue and risk; we have been told that there are still instances where the company hit the override button when our colleagues move outside agreed parameters for the 12 pieces of silver.

Chain of care and trauma support for those unfortunate enough to be involved in an incident is being further developed with the support of the executive committee and we hope to take a report to the EC in March.

Pay is a major issue and council will meet with the executive sub group this month to discuss ASLEF's submission; remember, attend your branch and get your views heard in the correct forum, make the effort, and

influence our submission.

As the Arriva Trains Wales franchise reaches its end in 2018 there will be a great deal of discussion on the way forward. The Welsh government has undertaken a very bold initiative, with Transport Minister Edwina Hart setting up a cross-party working group with various experts, including our Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen, to look at a not for profit railway and how this would sit with the franchising agreement currently in place. Westminster has devolved Welsh rail to the Welsh Assembly government.

A not for profit railway has the full support of Welsh Labour and Plaid Cymru and council, along with the general secretary, recently attended Holyhead branch for a presentation from Rhun ap Iorwerth, PC AM for Ynys Môn, on Plaid's way forward for rail. It was made very clear that, short of renationalisation, not for profit is the only way the profits currently enjoyed by DBS can remain in Wales.

The GS carried on this theme in his address to the branch and further stressed the failings of the franchise system and the blinkered approach still being pushed forward by the coalition government in London. It's a reminder that the railways are a time bomb waiting to explode in the face



Land of poets and singers and people of stature



ANDY HUDD, executive committee member for District 7, reports on the old land of the mountains, whose brave warriors shed their blood for freedom

I have been to Wales many times in my life, from the beautiful coastline of Pembrokeshire in the south west to the impressive mountains of Snowdonia in the north but, last month, I had the opportunity to see a part of Wales I had never seen before. On a fresh Sunday morning Brian Corbett and I made our way to Treherbert to attend their branch meeting. Nestled in the Rhondda Valley, surrounded by rolling hills, you would be forgiven for believing there was no railway if it wasn't for the fact that you'd just travelled there on one!

The journey from Cardiff runs from a complex station still struggling with an overrunning signalling project (CASR) to a valley railway that narrows to a single line at Porth. You can see the remains of old railway lines and old coal mines, vivid reminders of a vibrant industrial past. Further up the line from Treherbert you can still see the entrance to the Rhondda Tunnel that once connected the valley with Swansea Bay but was closed by British Rail in 1968.

It is sad to see this once busy railway so under-used, especially as statistics in *UK Trade and Investment* show that '79 foreign companies invested in Wales in 2013-14' which is the highest investment into Wales from abroad for 25 years. This investment is, of course, welcomed. However, you wonder how much more investment (and employment prospects) the Rhondda would attract if this former industrial community had a modern railway network servicing it.

Concerns were raised at the Welsh Labour Party conference over the huge public funding received (and profits taken by) German-owned Arriva Trains Wales that subsequently leak out of the country. If this money was re-invested in Wales's rural networks it could be used to bring better rail services into the valleys which, in turn, would re-energise the towns and villages they serve. No wonder the Welsh Assembly is keen to make the railway in Wales not for profit and this is very much welcomed by ASLEF as a step to a fully nationalised modern railway.

Many rail projects in Wales have been promoted and paid for by the Welsh government, including £170 million for the electrification of the Cardiff valley lines; £30 million to re-open Ebbw Vale for passenger use in 2008 after being closed in 1962; £17 million to re-open the Vale of Glamorgan line, closed for passenger operation in 1964, in 2005; £4.3 million to re-open Llanharan station in 2007 (closed by Beeching in 1964); £13 million of joint investment with Network Rail on infrastructure projects on the Cambrian coast line; ongoing investment of £44 million to improve capacity and journey times between North and South Wales. There are many more examples of how a Labour government in Wales invests in rail.

On 7 May when you go the ballot box at the general election remember that voting Labour does matter. Because, no, the political parties are not all the same. Your vote in May – and in May 2016 for the Welsh Assembly – will make a real difference to the rail services the government provides – and we want to drive.

Steve Williams, Swansea branch chair

of any future government not brave enough to make the right decision, with vast profits being made and shipped out of the country.

The Labour-led Welsh government has taken up the cause and is striving to put in place a system for a sustainable railway that delivers for the people of Wales and doesn't fleece taxpayers at the expense of profiteering stakeholders.

John Boreham, Arriva Trains Wales company council

MEN OF HARLECH

Ever since the Welsh government was set up in 1999 following the yes vote for devolution by the Welsh people, ASLEF has had good links with the minister responsible for transport. Andrew Davies was the first minister to hold regular meetings with the transport trade unions and he often got his information on the ground, asking train staff, rather than using a civil service brief. This has continued and ASLEF has regular meetings with the current Transport Minister Edwina Hart.

Slip out the back, Jack make a new plan, Stan



Marz Colombini kicked off our debate on Britain's continued membership of the European Union in the January edition of the *Journal*. Stefano Fella made the case for staying in the EU in February. Here, in the third and final part of our series, **KELVIN HOPKINS argues that it's time to walk away**

IT WAS the left, the labour and trade union movement, which strongly opposed joining the Common Market, now the European Union. Hugh Gaitskell led the Labour Party in opposing entry to the original Common Market in the 1950s and it was a Conservative Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, who applied for British entry. It was another Conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath, and his Tory government who, in 1973, led Britain into the European Economic Community against stiff Labour opposition.

That pattern, of Labour opposition and Conservative support for the Common Market/European Union, was sustained for 30 years and it was a Labour government which initiated the 1975 Common Market referendum. A special Labour Party conference that year overwhelmingly recommended a vote for UK withdrawal; ASLEF was one of the unions supporting the Labour majority view. (I well remember a cheery conversation I had at the conference with ASLEF's general secretary Ray Buckton).

MASSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN

A massive media campaign to stay in the Common Market, supported by big business, the Tories and, it has to be said, by a minority in the Labour Party, saw the pro side victorious. Labour, led by Michael Foot, subsequently went on to fight the 1983 general election on a policy of UK withdrawal but Labour's early opinion poll lead disappeared as a result of the Falklands War and Labour lost the election. The Labour leadership, in the late 1980s, then did a dramatic U-turn and has since then been supportive of the EU, despite its disastrous economic performance.

It was clear from the outset that the Common Market was designed to advance the cause of free market capitalism, and neo-liberalism, and to begin to roll back the tremendous socialist advances seen in the immediate post-war years across Europe. The breaking down of national economic barriers, the transfer of political power from national parliaments to the bureaucratic and undemocratic European Commission were all



of a piece with the drive to marketise, globalise, privatise and liberalise national economies. Giving freedom to bankers and billionaires to move their money without hindrance across national boundaries was key, and it is significant that Margaret Thatcher's first act on gaining power in 1979 was to abandon so-called exchange controls. The free flow of international finance led directly to the world economic crisis of 2008, from which we are still suffering, and which came close to bringing down the global economy in chaos.

COSTING THE COUNTRY DEAR

For Britain, EU membership means that we have had to accept free movement, the Common Fisheries Policy, and the Common Agricultural Policy. The CFP has led directly to our seas being over-fished and the CAP has meant that, for decades, our food has been more expensive than it need have been. The CAP is also the primary reason why Britain is such a substantial net contributor to the EU budget, costing the country over £10 billion a year and rising.

But most significant of all has been the long-term impact of the EU on economic growth and living standards, both of which have been constrained by EU membership. We are significantly poorer than we could have been had we not been members of the EU.

There is a myth that leaving the EU would be disastrous for the British economy which is simply untrue. Even now Britain imports much more from the EU than we export to it, amounting to a trade deficit of over £1 billion a week, the equivalent of around one million jobs exported to the rest of the EU. The suggestion that the EU would indulge in a trade war with Britain when it benefits so much from us buying their products is simply nonsense.

The EU is about economics – economics which do not work. We had economic arrangements in Britain established after 1945 which did work, when economies were carefully managed by governments to ensure

full employment, rising living standards and economic stability. Substantial sections of the economy were nationalised and democratically accountable, and a strong welfare state to sustain the elderly and the vulnerable was established. Most recently the railway unions have been opposing the EU's so-called 'fourth railway package' which is about marketising rail services when the reality is that those nationalised and integrated railway industries work best.

WORKING PEOPLE'S LIVES

If there is any doubt about the damage being done to working people's lives, simply ask a Greek or a Spaniard and the answer would be very clear. Just to get an idea of how bad things are, over half of all young people under 25 in Spain are unemployed, and the equivalent level of unemployment, if applied to Britain, would mean we would have 7 million unemployed, not the 2 million we have now. Things in Greece are even worse, with living standards having been cut by a quarter. This is not a future for Britain – or for Europe.

● Kelvin Hopkins was a lecturer at St Albans College of Further Education, an economist at the TUC, a policy officer at NALGO and Unison, and a councillor on Luton Borough Council, before becoming Labour MP for Luton North in 1997. He is a member of the Socialist Campaign Group and chair of the ASLEF parliamentary group.

Non, rien de rien non, je ne regrette rien

The French Foreign Legion, with its white kepis, desert forts and the fabled wooden hand of a long-dead hero, exerts a powerful grip on the popular imagination. KEITH RICHMOND talks to train driver, and former Legionnaire, Jim Buchan about the reality of a soldier's life in the Legion

MANY train drivers, and ASLEF members, have a military background. Most served in the British army, Royal Navy, or RAF; occasionally, a regiment in one of the Commonwealth countries. Very few joined the French Foreign Legion; in fact, Jim Buchan might well be unique.

'Life in the Legion, with its comradeship, and fighting spirit, is great,' says Jim, 49. 'The Legion has an extraordinary past, but a future, too, because governments don't want their own troops killed in places such as Bosnia and Baghdad. It's a rapid reaction force, ready to be deployed at a moment's notice, when there's a bit of bother in Djibouti or Chad.'

The legend of the Legion – its famous code of honour, the parade ground song *Non, je ne regrette rien*, the white kepi, green and red epaulettes, the way the wooden hand of Captain Danjou, killed at the Battle of Camarón in 1863, is paraded every year at the Legion's headquarters in Aubagne – exerts a powerful grip on the popular imagination, helped by novels such as *Beau Geste*, PC Wren's popular adventure yarn which has been turned into several swashbuckling films.

LEGIO PATRIA NOSTRA

La Légion étrangère was formed in 1831; a regiment of foreign nationals – the officers are French – for fighting foreign wars. The Legion – motto *Legio Patria Nostra*, the Legion is our country – quickly acquired a reputation as an élite fighting force, and for accepting fugitives from justice seeking redemption. It has always had a very strong esprit de corps.

'I turned up in Lille and joined up,' says Jim. 'I had to learn French very quickly – they give you lessons every day – because between 6am and 6pm you have to speak French. You hand over your passport and they give you another name. I was Johnny Badry. They keep you hanging around for a couple of weeks, to test your commitment, and check it's not just because you saw *Beau Geste* as a kid.' Then it was Paris for a week of tests, Aubagne in the south of France, and six months' basic training at Castelnauvauvray.

'There were a lot of people fleeing from something, not cut out for life in the Legion. Lots of Portuguese, Spanish, Cambodians, Finnish, Germans, and a lot dropped out or



were kicked out. It felt a real achievement when I got the white kepi on the parade ground in front of the regiment. It was tough – if you fell out with the sergeants, who run the Legion, you got a visit in the middle of the night – but you knew what was expected.'

He served with the 2nd Foreign Parachute Regiment at Calvi on Corsica – 'Yes, I jumped out of a plane, the second time was worse than the first' – trained as a combat frogman, in explosives sabotage, 'and, basically, lived on the beach.'

They were deployed in Chad and Djibouti, 'difficult places to go,' where, roaming the sands in Land Rovers with .50 calibre Browning machine guns mounted on top, 'we would stop Ethiopians coming over the border, anyway necessary.'

BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE

It is, he says, a great life. 'They feed you, clothe you, pay you, not particularly well, but you've got to be prepared to give 100%, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you're a non-hacker, you're going to struggle. You sign up for five years and, at the end, you get a French passport and, often, a job as well because the Legion looks after its own. I'm very proud to have served.'

It wasn't Jim's first spell in the military. He was born and brought up in the fair city of Perth, as it's known after the novel by Sir Walter Scott, in 1965. Jim was in the Air Training Corps, the RAF cadets, and, when he left school, joined the RAF Regiment, whose job is to defend our airfields against enemy attack. He spent four years in Germany – 'some of the best years of my life' – where he trained on the Rapier anti-aircraft missile system at RAF Laarbruch and did three tours of the Falklands after the war with Argentina.

'Everything in Germany is good. It's based on families, values and traditions and the bürgermeister runs the village. Coming from a council scheme in Perth it was like another planet to me. The mark was a wonderful currency that gave me free beer. A 100 mark note meant 100 beers. Warsteiner was my beer of choice. Its nickname was Wobbly, because it attacked you at the knees. I played

Jim manning an anti-aircraft battery in the Falklands (above left); wearing the coveted white kepi in the French Foreign Legion (left); and today as a train driver in his home city of Perth (above)

for a village football team, Wildenrath, centre forward and top scorer, and they had a beer, not a cup of tea, at half time! And, after the match, bratwurst and chips.'

The Falklands meant eight months up in the hills on the lookout for enemy aircraft, with a long walk into Port Stanley for a shower 'and a bit of R&R' once a week while Northern Ireland, at RAF Aldergrove, meant keeping a low profile while offering close protection for VIPs. He dryly remembers lying in the garden at the house of James Molyneux, a former leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, when a woman in wellies came up and asked if he'd like a cup of tea. 'Kind of her, but it gave away my position...' He also wryly recalls being fined £750 after being spotted by MPs coming back from seeing an Irish girlfriend in the 'black sector' or no-go bandit country of County Antrim.

LOYALTY AND HONOUR

He left the Legion because his father – 'a signalman here in Perth' – was seriously ill and joined the railway as a freight guard in 1992. 'I went for my interview on the Friday and they said, "You're Stan Buchan's son, aren't you? Start on Monday, dinna be late." I really like the railway, it's not the military but, especially back then, it was like family, with the comradeship and socialising together.' He was promoted to trainman D, working ballast trains, then in 1997 passed out as driver, on passenger trains out of Edinburgh Waverley and then, in 2002, moved back to Perth to work services to Aberdeen, Inverness, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The French Foreign Legion is all about loyalty and honour and Jim, who's been a branch official, area rep, and served on district council, believes in the union – 'sticking up for the wee man' – as much as he believes in the Legion. 'If it wasn't for Kevin Lindsay, and ASLEF, I wouldn't have my job.'



End of an era

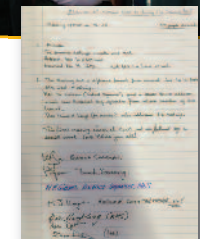
It is with great sadness that I write to inform you of the closure of Parkeston (157) branch. Our last meeting was held on Sunday 11 January 2015; it marked the end for an ASLEF branch that has witnessed the rise and demise of rail passenger and freight operations at Harwich International Port (Parkeston Quay as we still call it) for 107 years. As recently as the 1980s, the port dealt with seven passenger ships, four container ships, four train ferries and numerous ro-ros every 48 hours. Every ship was good news for drivers and shunters at Parkeston; they kept the men busy, with over 20 trains daily, in addition to local services.

In its heyday, the depot had several links which, together, contained the names of more than 100 drivers and assistants as the port and its associated railway services thrived. We all know what has happened to ports and rail services around the country and Parkeston has seen its trade all but vanish. Parkeston managed to survive, as a depot, as part of EWS until 2008 when



management informed us we would be merged with Norwich depot and relocated to Ipswich. This is where we still reside although our one remaining link carries the names of just 11 drivers and three vacancies. The ASLEF branch was here, through good times and bad, but with more and more drivers residing 30 or more miles away from Parkeston the writing has been on the wall for some time.

Our last meeting was open to all Parkeston railwaymen and was an overwhelming success. I was amazed by the number of people who gave up their day to come and spend time with old friends and colleagues and moved by one man who introduced himself and said: 'I used to be branch secretary in 1954!' This shows how the railway, and ASLEF, are more than employment related; they are a way of life and I feel that every one of us should be trying to live up to the



The faces at – and the minutes of – the last meeting

standards and traditions. The afternoon ended with a presentation by ASLEF reps to the branch chairman and secretary and the sale of limited edition closure badges. All proceeds are being donated to the district council banner fund.

Our sincere thanks to Nigel Gibson, district organiser; Howard Kaye, EC member; and Richard Hurst, DB Schenker company council rep; who all travelled considerable distances to join us. The current members of Parkeston branch will now be joining with ASLEF's Ipswich branch and, together, we will continue the work of this great union.

Paul Forman, ex-secretary, Parkeston

Upcoming events

● EASTLEIGH – SATURDAY 14 MARCH

All drivers, second men, shunters, guards and railwaymen welcome from 12.00 to 18.00 at the Railway Institute near the station. Details from Peter Morris (01962 866186).

● CRICKLEWOOD – FRIDAY 20 MARCH

The next reunion will be at the RAFA Club, Ashburnham Road, Bedford from 12.00.

● GLOUCESTER – SATURDAY 28 MARCH

All active and retired members associated with Horton Road or Barnwood depots are welcome at the Fountain Inn, Westgate Street, Gloucester from midday. Contact Jerry Matthews (07500 800195) for more information.

● RAMSGATE – THURSDAY 2 APRIL

Southeastern retired and working members' reunion from 11.00 at the Red Arrow Club, Newington Road, Ramsgate.

● STONEBRIDGE PARK/WEMBLEY – 18 APRIL

LMS retired and working members' reunion from 14.00 at the Euston Flyer, Euston Road, London.

● STRATFORD – SATURDAY 25 APRIL

Our annual reunion is at the Railway Tavern Hotel, 131 Angel Lane, Stratford, E15 from 17.00 until late. If you need a room, contact the Railway Tavern on 020 8534 3123.

● DIDCOT – SATURDAY 2 MAY

RMS reunion from 12.00 at Didcot Railway Club. All past and present members and associates welcome.

Heavy going at Heavy Haul



Outgoing chair Dave D'Arcy picks up his engraved tankard and retirement certificate from Nigel and Simon (left) and Bro N Lunn (right) gets his 40 year badge

Eastleigh branch welcomed national organiser Simon Weller and GBRF/Freightliner lead officer Nigel Gibson to our agm. Simon gave us an overview of the freight industry, saying how FOCs are now very different to TOCs after 20 years of privatisation. He highlighted how the ScotRail sleeper contract has created problems for DBS staff at Millerhill; explained how potential changes to EU train driver licences could be a threat to all drivers; and the complex problems with pensions. Nigel explained the



problems with the Freightliner pension scheme and the recovery plan put in place. He talked about the progress being made on Freightliner Intermodal with noise cancelling headphones and ERJA. The next pay rise will be 3.5% which is above the industry norm. With FLHH he talked about a proposal for job share, the driver protection scheme and the increase in membership. Nigel also said how difficult it has been to interact with GBRF management on a number of issues.

Paul Barber, secretary

Art of darkness

Tilbury branch listened to local reps' reports and then our guest speakers, starting with EC member Howard Kaye and then, from the RMS, Bill Dale and the indefatigable PJ Smith, with new committee recruit Les Muir in tow. Once business was concluded, everybody adjourned to enjoy an excellent buffet laid on by Steve Wilson and quaff a few ales before wending their way home under cover of darkness.

Cliff Blackwell, branch chair



Tilbury team line-up at the branch meeting (above) and Steve Wilson, business council rep for Freightliner Intermodel, receives his 40 year badge from Howard (left)

District 1 Organiser Graham Morris attended Bournemouth train crew social club's annual retirement dinner dance to present retirement certificates to Christopher Ellis, Mick Gubbins and Clive Hoyle. Mick also got his 50 year medallion. We wish all three (and Chris Foster, another retiree who was, unfortunately, unable to attend the presentation) all the best for a long and happy retirement.

Jamie Martin, branch secretary



Back row, from left, LDC rep Phil Miesleszko, DO Graham Morris, Jamie Martin and LDC rep Stuart Armour. Front row: Chris Ellis, Mick Gubbins and Clive Hoyle.



Despite the weather, which was rather wet, there was a good turnout for the class of 2015 at Ashford. Some old faces were missing, booked absent on parade, but on the plus side some new faces attended. By the time I mustered the photo shoot the sun had come out, but some had managed to escape, so I made do with the diehards, one of whom produced a copy of a special strike issue of the *Journal* from 1955.

PJ Smith, RMS reporter



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Mick Holder looks back to March 1915 and life on the home front

CRUSHED BETWEEN AN ENGINE

While some locomotive engineers and firemen were facing death on an industrial scale in the fields of Flanders others were facing death at home. Organising Secretary H Parfitt reports: 'On 21st I attended a Board of Trade inquiry, conducted by Mr Hornby, at Mountain Ash, in regard to an Aberdare fireman, who was crushed between an engine and a wagon when getting round the bunker to change a headlight. On 30th I was at Yatton in connection with a fatal accident which happened the previous day. On 2nd I was at Bristol attending a Board of Trade inquiry concerning the death by accident of shunter Redwood. There was no blame attached to our member – a Bristol member – in this case, but the accident, or the inquiry, will probably lead to new regulations being put into operation at Kingsland Road, where the accident happened.'

LOST HIS LEFT ARM

Organising Secretary J Drummond reports: 'I had several matters to attend to, visiting the relatives of a deceased member's wife and paying the claim. On 20th I investigated a fatal accident at Coatbridge. I attended a Board of Trade inquiry at Carmeyhill, near Dunfermline, on 27th, into the accident to Brother Kershaw who has lost his left arm from the shoulder. He was crossing the footplate to exchange tablets and he fell out on to the platform. It appears he bounded on to the platform and got between the tender and the first carriage, as he was found in the four foot way, the first carriage having passed over his arm. I was at a fatal accident inquiry at Kirkaldy into the death of a platelayer, who was killed at Cardenden, Fife.'

FINED FIVE SHILLINGS

The York branch secretary says: 'One of our members, in his endeavour to hasten matters when turning his engine at a terminus, had the misfortune to allow his engine to collide with a building in close proximity with the turntable. The regulator not shutting off properly, the steam accumulated and the engine moved. Fined 5s for his effort to further the company's interests, and in consequence neglecting to safeguard himself. Such lessons should teach us to fight for more time allowance at terminal points, also a time allowance for food.'

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If you prefer a paper application You can print one off from bitetheballot.co.uk/resources/ and send it to your local authority which you can look up by going to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/

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LIAM CAMPBELL WONDERFUL SENSE OF HUMOUR

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Waterloo driver Brother Liam (Bill) Campbell, at the young age of 54. Bill was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and, soon after, was given the devastating news that his illness was terminal. Unfortunately his condition deteriorated rapidly and, within a short period of time, Waterloo had lost one of their own. We were left in a state of shock and the mess room was filled with a deep feeling of sorrow.

In the truest sense, Bill was a gentleman and his friendship

never failed to brighten our days. He was a well respected train driver who had a knack of lifting our morale with his warmth, cheeky smile and wonderful sense of humour. Bill had a strong sense of justice that never stopped him from contributing to mess room matters. His opinions were valued by us all.

Bill spent the last few days of his life in a hospice and many of the Waterloo family managed to visit him there in Clapham. He never lost his sense of humour and even managed a little drop of the black stuff that had been supplied to him by one of his colleagues. He leaves behind a wife and three sons; Pat has just qualified as a guard at Waterloo. Waterloo is in mourning but



There's no business like snow business for Bill

we have been left with the most wonderful memories of a genuine friend. Thank you for your friendship Bill, you will be sorely missed by all of us here.

**Steve Richardson,
Waterloo Nine Elms**

RON COOPER FINAL DEPARTURE

Retired driver Roy Cooper died on 12 December aged 78. He was known on the railway as Ron because, when he started at Gillingham, there was already a Roy Cooper, so he opted for Ron. He transferred to Feltham in 1953 and did his national service in the Royal Sussex Regiment from 1954 to 1956. While in the army he met Pat and they married in 1958. When Feltham closed he went to Stewarts Lane, Battersea, and then Victoria. Ron was a staff rep in 1981-82 when Gatwick Express was starting up. He took early retirement in 2002 under ill health.

Ken Heydon, Battersea

JOE DUNBAR ACTIVE IN THE ORDER OF ST JOHN

I have to inform you of the death of retired Stonebridge Park and Huddersfield driver Joseph Dunbar. A softly spoken, mild mannered Scot, Joe was born in 1923 and started on the railway at Carlisle aged 17.

He travelled south to Willesden 1A before moving, as so many did, to Devon's Road for

his driver's job. Moving, when seniority allowed, back to Willesden as a driver.

Joe became very active in the St John Ambulance Brigade, rising to a senior level. Along with fellow first aid trained drivers he took many of the company operated first aid courses which operated at the time.

Moving to Huddersfield to be near his family, Joe retired in 1988 after 47 years' service but remained in touch with his former work colleagues attending many of the 1A reunions.

Our thoughts and condolences are with his family at this difficult time.

David Doman, Stonebridge Park RMS

Turning back the blue tide in the East of England

NIGEL GIBSON reports from the East of England Labour Party conference at Copdock in Suffolk

A SLEF, not for the first time, had a strong presence at the East of England Labour Party conference held at Copdock near Ipswich. Our delegation of Labour and trade union activists included Floyd Doyle, Wendy Hurst, Les Bennett, Mark Reynolds, Mark Daniels, and District Organiser Nigel Gibson.

Soon after arrival a reception was held by the Trade Union Labour Organisation which campaigns to build on, and improve, the links between the party and the unions, followed by an excellent couple of hours at the comedy event Stand Up for Labour – the headline act was Norman Lovett who starred in *Red Dwarf* – where the ASLEF delegation took a battering for arriving late.

The weekend went from strength to strength from an ASLEF perspective when the conference, chaired by Eileen Davidson of the regional board, heard from many high profile speakers in the shadow cabinet. Wendy took the opportunity to challenge Ed Balls on the



Norman Lovett (Holly in Red Dwarf) stands up for Labour (left); the ASLEF delegation with Lisa Forbes (above); and Eileen Davidson with her MBE



thorny subject of renationalising the rail industry; the response was not like the undelivered commitment given at a previous ASLEF conference, pre-1997, by the man who subsequently became Deputy Prime Minister, and it was obvious that the Labour leadership is still struggling to acknowledge and understand the real popular appeal of renationalisation, instead favouring a direction which would allow nationalised participation in the failed franchise bidding process.

The ASLEF fringe meeting, on rail policy, was chaired by Mark Daniels with speakers Nigel Gibson; Lara Norris, standing for Labour in Great Yarmouth; and Hymel Lloyd, who explained the policy document created, with our backing, to support rural transport. Support for rail has become a central topic at these conferences with growing passion and participation from a packed meeting; sadly, by then, the Shadow Chancellor had already left the building.

The political landscape is, at the moment, a

sea of blue in our region with only Kelvin Hopkins in Luton North and Gavin Shuker in Luton South bordering the East of England with a little red. But if we want to oppose Tory proposals to drive out trade unions; if we want to defend the NHS; rid ourselves of zero hours contracts; and provide opportunities for the next generation, then we must push back the blue tide in East Anglia; and support and work for Labour candidates across the region. Lisa Forbes in Peterborough; Clive Lewis in Norwich; Polly Billington in Thurrock; and Lara in Yarmouth are all committed to working with ASLEF, and supporting our policies, on the issues that matter to us all.



We welcome letters, either by email to journal@aslef.org.uk or by Royal Mail to **ASLEF Journal at 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN**. Each month the writer of our **star letter** wins a rich range of ASLEF regalia.

You couldn't make it up!

I recently picked up on fleet news in *Rail* magazine something that I had to read through more than once. Here goes! Serco, the new operator of the Caledonian Sleeper, is hiring in its loco haulage from GB Railfreight and, as a temporary measure, is considering hiring in Class 47 diesels from the same company. So far, so good, you may think. But these Class 47s will then be hired from Harry Needle Railroad which, in turn, will hire five of the locos required from RT Rail. Are you still with me? Because I have not yet finished! Six locos will be required and, because it will leave Harry Needle short of this type of traction, discussions are to be held with a preservation group in order to get hold of another loco. You really could not make this up!

John Rimington, Maidstone, Kent

Why I'm a union man

In 2013 I stopped driving trains because of an eye infection which, after a year, was diagnosed as cone dystrophy, a problem with the retina in the eyes. I wanted to work, doing something other than driving, but Northern Rail at first said there was nothing for me to do. I was told to stay at home on the sick. I contacted Tosh McDonald and Nick Whitehead; they did their best for me and I returned to work in a non-safety critical job, as I cannot drive trains any more. I want to give a really big thank you to Tosh, Nick, Mick Cutts (driver and friend), Doncaster LLC, and Donny branch members, other branches and the hardship fund, for all your help, support and collections. The money really helped my family and it just goes to show how supportive ASLEF is, as a trade union, for its members.

Keith Mason, Doncaster

Religion and the railway

Further to the discussion regarding loss of life and religion between Bro Worboys (*Journal*, November and January) and me (*Journal*, December). I believe we are both missing each other's point. My submission regarding loss of life on the roads and at abortion clinics, was to highlight the disregard we, as a civilised society, have regarding life. In no way can religion be the cause. It was a relief to read in your last letter that the use of religion by fanatics is the culprit. 'Who do you suggest does the policing' regarding the commandments? Self! I note your recommended reading omitted Matthew,

WHY WE NEED MORE WORKING CLASS PEOPLE IN PARLIAMENT

I enjoyed reading Phill Amies' letter (*Journal*, October) and agree with most of his comments. But the point is that there has never been a perfect government to represent the working man and there probably never will be.

Napoleon Bonaparte set out to represent his fellow citizens but blew it when he had himself crowned emperor! The Duke of Wellington, who beat Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo 200 years ago, was opposed to the working-class being taught to read and write. And when the railway arrived he was horrified that ordinary people now had the opportunity to travel wherever they liked.

With the industrial



Wellington at Waterloo by Robert Alexander Hillingford

revolution, workers endured cruel conditions and low pay. If they complained, or tried to form a trade union, they were promptly sacked. The Great War of 1914-18 was a rich man's war in which millions of working-class men died.

ASLEF was formed in 1880 and had a long and difficult fight to secure the eight hour day. But, thanks to this trade union, train drivers now enjoy a wage, and the

free time, of which at one time we could only dream.

But we now have some rich Labour MPs who are completely out of touch, and don't identify, with working people. In fact, some are more Tory than members of the Conservative Party! That's why we want, and need, more ordinary, working-class people in parliament.

Denis Lewis, Kingsteignton, Devon

Mark, Luke, and John. May I suggest we agree to disagree and return the letters pages to the problems of our railway? For starters, why did the nationalised railway fail?

W Potter, ex-LMS, Liverpool

Making plans for Nigel

Nick Clarke (*Journal*, February) moved to Western Australia to 'bring a needed skill here' just as many immigrants from Eastern Europe moved to the UK to take up vacancies created by the failure of our education and vocational training systems. Maybe it's just as well he moved to Australia where, if Prime Minister Tony Abbott is anything to go by, racism, sexism, homophobia and bigotry are acceptable. Perhaps we should encourage Nigel Farage and his ilk to jump on the next flight Down Under.

ASLEF Shrugged, Central line train operator and blogger

On our guard against DOO

Within the next few years First Great Western will be operating new electric trains out of Paddington to Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea. I am given to understand that these trains will be capable of operating in driver only mode and some of my fellow employees, principally guards/conductors and train managers, are expressing concern that their jobs could be lost if DOO were to be extended from the current arrangements to include more services and additional routes.

More DOO working would only increase the stress levels experienced by drivers who are daily subjected to time delay pressures and safety implications if they were to cut corners. There are many ex-drivers who thought, wrongly, that their actions, taken under pressure, would not impact on their career.

We must be on our guard (pardon the pun) and, if necessary, fight this with all the means

A MILLION MILES AWAY

Interesting to read February's *Journal* interview with Michael Dugher, the new Shadow Transport Secretary. Despite his impeccable working-class roots, he has predictably followed the path into Westminster trodden by many current Labour MPs. No actual experience in a workplace, but much time spent studying politics at university, followed by time as a researcher, special adviser roles and, hey presto, a safe seat in the Commons!

Close reading of the article

shows a lack of anything from the left in politics and, for a union so close to Labour, a million miles away not just from our own political policies, but far removed from public opinion, too. We've had 13 years of broken Labour promises, in government, followed by five years of, watered down Tory transport policies from Labour in opposition. It's not romantic, as Mr Dugher suggests, to want a publicly owned railway, but common sense, for financial and political reasons. The East Coast worked for the country under public ownership and delivered to the exchequer, so why won't Labour commit to

reverse privatisation?

Talk of public sector bids being allowed is nonsense. As the accompanying story on page 4 confirms, from Ed Balls' comments, Labour will continue the same austerity driven budgetary policies of the Tories, so where will any public sector bidders come from, and where will they get their funding? Certainly not, under Labour, from the DfT.

Mr Dugher, his predecessors, and two decades of Labour leaning well to the right, have resulted in policies that will maintain the discredited franchising system, when what it needs is scrapping. So, please, let's cut the pretence that the people's



Michael talks to the *Journal* over a cuppa in Donny

flag is deepest red, when we know it's very pale pink, almost light blue. Yet it could be so much better; nationalise the railways and the utilities, give the people a vote on the EU, follow an anti-austerity path and Labour could get a landslide. But it won't, because the party we helped found lost its heart and soul long ago.

John Metcalfe, Carlisle

at our disposal if FGW do seek to increase DOO operations as it would adversely impact on all train crew grades. It would mean an increase in trains running without an experienced second member of train crew, with route and traction knowledge, qualified in emergency procedures, particularly over longer distances.

I would like to see ASLEF and the RMT working together to ensure no jobs are lost and drivers are not 'incentivised' to take on an

even greater workload. Since rail privatisation drivers have experienced substantial increases in real terms pay, but accompanied by greater workload pressures from more intense diagrams. A similar situation may develop at other train operating companies, for example Arriva Trains Wales, when the valley lines in

south east Wales are electrified.

As a driver with more than 40 years' experience on the footplate, and as a former ASLEF official, I want to highlight this issue as I fear the consequences if we are not prepared in advance and tackle this threat head on.

Steve Davies, Westbury, Wiltshire

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APPRECIATION FOR ALAN



You'll never walk alone, Alan

At our recent branch meeting Hugh Bradley, the EC member for District 2, reported that EC president Alan Donnelly has retired. Hugh gave a summary of the changes ASLEF has gone through whilst Alan has been president. There have been some tough times but, with the strong leadership that Alan has provided, the union has come out stronger during his terms as president. Therefore Motherwell branch would like to place on record its appreciation and gratitude for all the hard work and commitment Alan has shown. We wish him all the best for his retirement.

A Jones, branch secretary



BANBURY branch 103 has a number of badges for sale at £5 plus p&p, proceeds to Katherine House Hospice for looking after Brother Chris Farmer during his final months. Contact Jim Browne on 07717 847057 or jimbr0wne@yahoo.co.uk



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Letters home from our Soldier Lads



Hopes that the Great War would be over by Christmas died as troops dug in grimly in the fields of Flanders. By the early months of 1915, dreams of glory had been replaced by the brutal realities of life and death on the Western Front.

MICK HOLDER looks back through the *Locomotive Journal* for the testimony of train drivers who volunteered and then wrote about their harrowing experiences in letters home

THREE DAYS STANDING UP TO OUR KNEES IN WATER, MUD AND NO SHELTER

'You will be surprised to hear I am in dear old England again, although I am in hospital suffering from frostbite and rheumatism. I came home on Tuesday last and, after the horrible times I experienced, I can assure you I was very glad to get away. I came out of action on Christmas Eve, and went back in the trenches again on Boxing Day. We remained there three days standing up to our knees in water and mud, the rain coming down in torrents continually, and having no shelter whatever, we were many times up to our waists, so you may imagine what state we were in.

'When we had relief it took us about four hours to get back for rest and, on the way back, several of us, including our officer, had to be dug out of the mud. When at last we got back to the base, I had to report myself sick, as my hands and feet were so swollen that I had to have someone else take off my boots. I had a very poor Christmas, bully beef and biscuits for dinner; here I am treated well and getting the best of everything.

'A German war plane came over and dropped some bombs on the village; one of them dropped on the road near some houses where several soldiers were billeted. Hearing the noise caused by the bombs bursting the soldiers and the occupants of the houses rushed out to see what was up. Immediately another bomb dropped nearby and they were all hit by the bullets, seven soldiers, two women, a father and



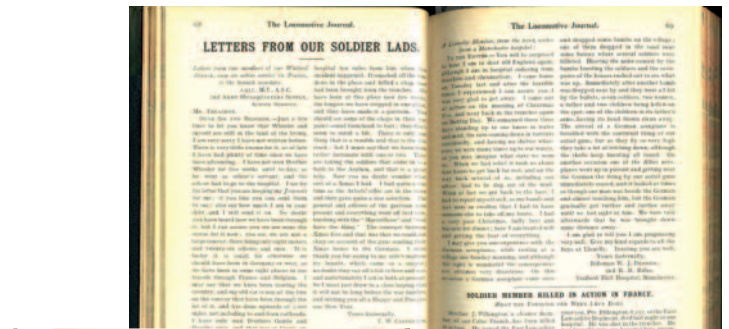
two children being killed on the spot, one of the children in its father's arms, having its head blown clean away.

'Give my kind regards to all the boys at Llanelli.'

Rifleman WJ Denner, 2nd King's Royal Rifles and Llanelli branch

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR AND I'M IN BOTH

'Wheeler and I are still in the land of the living. I had not seen Bro Wheeler for five weeks until today, as he went as officer's servant, and the officer had to go to hospital. I have only seen Bros Gentle and Darsley once, and that was at Crépy, on the retreat, but Witney I have seen two days ago. You should see some of the chaps in their war paint – mud from head to foot; they don't seem to mind a bit. Now you no doubt wonder what sort of a Christmas I had. Quite a time as the Artist's Rifles are in town and they gave a star selection and everything went off first rate, finishing with the *Marseillaise* and *God Save the King*. The contrast between Christmas Eve and that was we could not sleep on account of the guns sending their Christmas boxes to the Germans. I must thank you for seeing to my wife's maternity



Tommies in the trenches (above); Gassed by John Singer Sargent (above left); and Britain needs St George to slay the German dragon (above right)

benefit, which came as a surprise; they say all's fair in love and war and, unfortunately, I'm in both at present.'

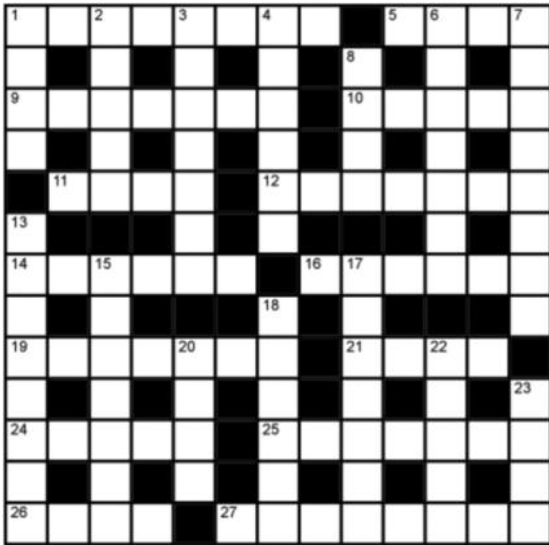
TW Carpenter, Watford branch

ASLEF MEMBER KILLED IN ACTION

The editor reported: 'Brother J Pilkington, a cleaner from our Colne branch, has been killed in action. He joined the East Lancashire Regiment at the commencement of the war, and had just completed his 19th year when he received his death

wound. He had only been at the front about a month. A claim has been made on our death fund on his behalf. His mother received the following letter in notification of his death: "25th field ambulance, 8th division. Dear Mrs Pilkington, I deeply regret to write and tell you that your son, Pte Pilkington, died last night in hospital. He was shot in the trenches. He was brought into our hospital here unconscious, and I do not think he knew anything before he died. May God grant you the only comfort that can be given. He will be buried today in our cemetery here. I shall conduct the funeral. I am, yours sincerely, Rev MWT Conran." Bro Pilkington's father, Sgt Pilkington, was injured on the same date as his son.'

Prize Crossword number 107 by Zebedee



Solution to prize crossword number 106 which appeared in the February edition of the *ASLEF Journal*

Across: 7 Mass produced 8 Realism 9 Knows 11 Settees 13 Patio 14 Neigh 16 Retrace 18 Duped 19 Tiniest 21 Undemocratic

Down: 1 Imprisoned 2 Asia 3 Sprite 4 Commiseration 5 Buck up 6 Lemon tea 10 Smokestack 12 Tripping 15 Hedges 17 Tenure 20 Eats

Congratulations to **Linda Henderson** of **Ramsgate, Kent**, who was last month's winner.

Across

1 Christopher –, discoverer of 6 down (8)
 5 Sheet of canvas found on a mast (4)
 9 Supernatural (7)
 10 Large sea (5)
 11 Colour of lapis lazuli (4)
 12 Eating out before noon can be a bloomer (7)
 14 One is not keen to exhibit it (6)
 16 Beleaguer aggressively (6)
 19 Curved; mature (7)
 21 Upper-class person (derogatory) (4)

24 Birthplace of 1 across (5)

25 Raised dot writing (7)
 26 The ultimate in shoe making equipment (4)
 27 Naively trustful (4, 4)

Down

1 Army settlement (4)
 2 The French girl concerned with the law (5)
 3 The Scottish play (7)
 4 Liquid loss, shortfall (6)
 6 States; morning girl (7)
 7 Follower of Soviet founder (8)
 8 Link (4)
 13 It is foolish to equip a

beginner with a song with no accompaniment (8)
 15 From the slum, Una, a former student (7)
 17 Insurance statistician (7)
 18 Fit to consume (6)
 20 Timber; issue cards (4)
 22 Female foal (5)
 23 Conduct; an element (4)



The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

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Thanks for all your responses to the 106th ASLEF crossword in the February edition. If you successfully complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, *ASLEF Journal*, 77 St John Street, London, EC1M 4NN by 14 March

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INVESTIGATIONS
DISPATCH
EXPERIENCE

MAINTENANCE
HEALTH
SAFETY
RAIL AND ROAD RISK
LINESIDE EQUIPMENT
APATHY

POSSESSION
FREIGHT
MANAGEMENT
BRIEFINGS
RIDDOR
WORKLOAD
SKILLS
CAB-DESIGN
LEVEL-CROSSING
LINESIDE
EQUIPMENT
STRESS
SECURITY
AGENCY
DOUBLE-SHIFTING
ASSAULT
EXPERIENCE
COMPETENCE
APATHY

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